



Powered by

## College grads back in demand

Advertisement

Posted 5/16/2006 11:15 PM ET

By Stephanie Armour, USA TODAY

College graduates are landing fat salaries and signing bonuses again as a stronger economy leads to the best college hiring market in years.

Employers expect their college hiring for 2005-06 to surpass that of the year before by nearly 14%, according to a study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

Aggressive hiring also means that many salary offers are outstripping last year's: The average starting salary offer for accounting degree graduates is up 5.4% over last spring, to \$46,188, while salary offers for computer-engineering graduates are up 5.3%, to \$54,200.

"It's the best (college job market) in four years," says Andrea Koncz at NACE, a Bethlehem, Pa.-based provider of information on the college job market. "With the economy improving, there is more demand for college grads. It's across the board."

•**Stronger starting salaries.** The tug of war between employers for newly minted graduates means many college graduates are getting higher starting salaries. Nearly nine out of 10 employers say competition for college hires has increased, and more than 20% have raised, or plan to raise, their starting salaries, according to NACE.

•**Recent grads can be choosy.** Increased competition means grads can be pickier about whether to relocate or what types of companies to consider. Top majors being hired this year include marketing, management, accounting and computer science, according to CollegeGrad.com, an entry-level job site.

Nick Parsons, 21, of Rye, N.Y., graduated in May from the University of Michigan with a bachelor's in political science. He had seven job offers and chose a position in Chicago. He begins his job July 1. "There's a lot of opportunity to interview. Companies would come to our campus," says Parsons, who took a job in commercial real estate consulting. "Companies are hiring."

His twin brother, he says, just landed a significant signing bonus from an investment bank.

Corporate recruiters plan to hire 18% more MBAs this year than in 2004, according to a survey by the Graduate Management Admission Council. Total compensation, with benefits and bonuses, is \$99,737, up from \$77,066 in 2004. One out of two MBAs is getting a signing bonus.

At Duke University, the number of employers coming to the career center is up 30% from last year, says Sheila Curran, director of the center in Durham, N.C.

"This is, as far as we've seen, the best market for college grads since the dot-com years," says Curran. "It's been a

strong year for employers coming to campus."

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.usatoday.com/money/economy/employment/2006-05-16-graduates-salaries\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/economy/employment/2006-05-16-graduates-salaries_x.htm)

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

